App to Corres. 14

course this does not mean that the proletariat ought to support any and every nationalist movement, at all times and in all places, no matter what the concrete conditions may be...In certain oppressed countries, nationalist movements may run counter to the general interests of the proletarian movement. Obviously, there can be no question of our helping such movements as these. The problem of national rights does not stand alone ; it is part of the general problem of the proletarian revolution, is subordinate thereto, and can only be considered by the proletariat from that angle.....

These words apply to the various nationalist movements. Contemplated, not from the outlook of formal, abstract right, but realistically, and with an eye to the revolutionary movement as a whole, a nationalist movement may be reactionary.

—Stalin, *Leninism*

SABOTAGE MOVEMENT and the INDIAN BOLSHEVIKS

LABOUR PARTY OF INDIA

16

First Impression May, 1943

The following is the Political Report of the Labour Party of India, passed in a session of the Central Executive Committee of the Party on January 19, 1943.

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The various demands of democracy, and among others the right of self-determination, have no absolute value, but are parts of the world wide democratic, (nowadays, socialist) movement. In the concrete instances, the interests of the part may conflict with the interests of the whole. If that is so, we must repudiate the part.

—Lenin *Works*, Russ. Ed. Vol. XIX Pp. 199-200

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CORRECTION

SABOTAGE MOVEMENT AND THE INDIAN BOLSHEVIKS

Page 1—Lines 24 and 25

In place of—"provide an alibi, to open negotiations with the conduct of the warfare"

Read—"provide an alibi to open negotiations with the Japanese victors in case they overran that the bourgeoisie had nothing to do with the conduct of warfare."

Page 1—Line 26

In place of "Page 3" read "Page 8"

SABOTAGE MOVEMENT
AND
THE INDIAN BOLSHEVIKS

The last Central Committee meeting was held at a time when Germany resumed offensive in the West, the Japanese began to press hard into China through the back door, and when the Indian bourgeois leadership, by making use of the genuine love of the Indian people for independence threatened to put into operation a large scale mass Civil Disobedience.

All our previous experience of the bourgeoisie pointed to their *reformist* character. How was it that at the supreme moment, when the fate of British Imperialism hung in the balance, they became uncompromising in the matter of immediate freedom? What is the explanation of this apparent transformation?

The Central Committee observed the following :—

"Any attempt to build the future of the bourgeoisie definitely on the basis of British hegemony is futile. Bourgeois strategy must be so based that it is not burdened with the onus of supporting the Allies, in the case of a Japanese victory. This represents the majority view of the bourgeoisie.....In order to narrow down the attack on the objective of acquiring state power in its limited sense...actual warfare is left to the British. It is possible that this also is an attempt to provide an alibi, to open negotiations with the conduct of the warfare" (CC resolution, *People's Front* No. 1, page 3).

Why is the Indian bourgeoisie reformist? It is because of this, that while it is unwilling to allow British capitalism to take away profits which it regards as its rightful spoil, while it chafes at the restrictions placed upon its growth by Imperialism, it has need of the protection of Imperialism to stamp out all opposition put up *by the toiling masses* under workingclass leadership to its development.

So long as Imperialism exists, it can afford the bourgeoisie this protection, but if, as the bourgeoisie then reckoned, Imperialism itself was faced with the danger of being wiped out, the bourgeoisie must needs fend for itself. It must not go down as Imperialism goes down. The more astute elements among the bourgeoisie realised that in case Japan emerged as a victor power, a better bargain could be struck if the bourgeoisie was already in the possession of civil power. The correct course then, was to frighten the British Government with Civil Disobedience, while it was in a difficult military position, into parting with civil power.

The CC resolution pointed out that :

"The threat of civil disobedience, if carried out, constituted a serious danger to the war effort in view of the presence of pro-fascist elements and acutely growing poverty."

There are, as we know, different types of pro-fascists in our country. There are those who are admirers of the principles of fascism—of the policy of ruling the masses by sheer brute force without any democratic pretensions. There are those who think that you must "pluck a thorn with a thorn", that is, drive away British Imperialism with the help of Japanese fascism. There may also be men who are actually in the Japanese pay. While their motives differ these men are united in practice in this that they wish to fan internal disturbances not as a mere threat but as a military instrument. They want to aid the invading army by creating an "uneasy rear".

Such men, we said, will carry the Civil Disobedience to such limits as to constitute a serious threat to the war effort. They would be helped in their object by the acutely growing poverty of the masses.

Little did that concern our bourgeoisie. However, it did affect the proletariat vitally. It is generally accepted by all communists that the victory of the Allies with the Soviet Union at its spearhead will serve the basic interests of the world proletariat. This is so because it will mean the destruction of fascist dictator-

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ship and at the very least, the restoration of democratic rights which workers have won through decades of struggles not only in the imperialist mother countries but also in the colonies ; the liberation of the whole of Europe and nearly half of Asia from the subjugation of fascist powers ; the liquidation of the danger of fascist enslavement threatening the colonies of the Allies and the liberation of the colonies of fascist powers ; an enormous strengthening of the Soviet Power and popular forces throughout the world with a simultaneous weakening of links in the chain of imperialism on a world scale.

In the victorious conclusion of such a war, the proletariat has nothing to lose and everything to gain. To maintain and enhance the wareffort for such a victory is of vital interest to the proletariat. But to the bourgeoisie of India, wrapped as it is in its narrow class interests all this is of no significance. To our bourgeoisie the question of all questions is. "What will it fetch *me*?"

At this stage a host of voices, from the British I. L. P. down to C. P. I. would pipe in a chorus : What about Nehru, the anti-fascist ?

NEHRUISM

The proper role of Nehruism cannot be understood by phillistines : only Marxists can trace in the amorphous nature of Nehruism its truly bourgeois character. The philistines may shout that we are casting aspersions on Pandit Nehru. Hardly. Pandit Nehru as a decent person may hate fascism to-day as fervidly as he hated imperialism yesterday. We as Marxists are not so much interested in his subjective hatred of fascism as in the utter incapacity of Nehruism to do anything in practice towards the destruction of fascism. We stress the word "incapacity", because it is not a question of Pandit Nehru's personal 'failings', but the material incapacity of Nehruism to play a part independently of the bourgeois leadership.

We assert : Nehruism is a bourgeois method, a bourgeois garb. Its amorphous nature is used as a smoke screen by the High Command of the bourgeoisie primarily to confuse the masses.

Nehruism is resorted to whenever the bourgeoisie feels the necessity of regrouping its shattered forces. (In this it bears a striking colonial resemblance to the role of Social-Democracy in the West). When after the 'Cease Fire' order of the High Command during the Civil Disobedience movement, the bourgeoisie suffered a shattering defeat, when its mass basis became the lowest it has ever been and when it was necessary to recreate that mass basis for the Elections of 1936, Nehruism was given a free play—until the Elections were won. Until then—but afterwards, the Nehru mask was no longer necessary. Gandhi came to the fore, Nehruism pensioned off, for the time being.

In recent times, when the bourgeois leadership was discredited as a result of the childish Satyagraha movement, when again a regrouping of bourgeois forces was necessary, Nehruism was resuscitated. Poor Pandit Nehru was put on the platform when he was allowed to denounce Fascism (with perfect sincerity) and to his heart's content. The philistines hailed him again as the coming Messiah. It was Nehru who saw Cripps and Louis Johnson. And yet no serious Marxist, no student of modern Indian history had the slightest doubt as to who held the key to the whole situation. Nehruism re-established the lost position of the bourgeoisie. The language of Nehruism was used to clothe and ornament the Congress Resolutions. But history is not made by words : it is made by action. When it came to action, the High Command asked Nehru to come off the stage.

Nehruism is the cloak which Gandhism wears when it is necessary to go on parade to cadge the support of the masses. It is used only for those ceremonial purposes. That cloak however is never meant to be worn in the business hours of the Indian bourgeoisie.

We were not deceived by words. The Congress

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Working Committee Resolution fairly reeked of Nehru's anti-fascist phrases, but we gauged its true worth : it was a threat to Civil Disobedience at a time when Civil Disobedienence would prove to be the most effective aid any one could give to a fascist invader. Because of the diametrically opposed directions of the "decorative" and the operative portions of the resolution we resolved that :

"Our duty is to expose the true character of the Congress Resolution, as the most hypocritical document produced so far by the Congress".

It may be contended that this was a wrong tactic. We should not have exposed the true character of the resolution forced upon the Indian people by the Bourgeois leadership. What we should have done was to make an alliance with those sections of the bourgeoisie (Nehru-Azad) which were Anti-Fascist in words if not in deeds. The course we should have adopted for achieving such an alliance was to praise Pandit Nehru sky-high and keep quiet about the policy of the majority.

The fallacy of such a tactic should be apparent to all who have the courage to face facts squarely. We should examine closely, in this connection, the part played by Pandit Nehru in the struggle against Fascism.

It will be remembered that directly after the outbreak of the Soviet German War, there ensued a desperate effort on the part of pro-fascists to discredit the Soviet Union as an "ally of Imperialism". They also made a morbid effort to prevent the Indian People from taking an active part in this Peoples' War. But, such was the popularity of the Soviet Union among the masses of the working people, that supporters of fascism began to lose ground. Anti-Fascism began to grow in popularity —under the leadership of the working class.

What was Pandit Nehru's role then ? Pandit Nehru declared his unequivocal preference for the United Nations. The result of this was that the growing popularity of Anti-Fascism found a champion, a leader, in one of the most popular figures in the Indian National Congress. In the eyes of the world, Jawaharlal became

the spearhead of Indian Anti-Fascism, Indian's Anti-Fascist No. 1.

After this, one discerned a peculiar ambiguity creeping in Panditji's speeches. One heard with increasing frequency that fascism was bad, but Imperialism was bad as well. The most essential prerequisite for the building up of an Anti-Fascist front, the *undivided, unequivocal and pointed hatred of Fascism, the feeling that Fascism is the main enemy, that every thing must be subordinated to the main purpose of the destruction of Fascism,* was lost in a confused two-front chatter. The sharp point of Anti-Fascism was blunted, bifurcated. It disorganised the forces of Anti-Fascism gathered under Jawaharlal's leadership and the stage was set for a return to where we were. The firm-as-rock Gandhian bourgeois leadership came to the fore.

Could a policy of chanting "Hail Nehru" have prevented this ? In point of fact, Panditji got all the support in the world behind him, literally. The Anti-fascist Congress masses supported him, the Communist Party of India supported him. The left forces and liberals in Britain and America swore by Nehru. And yet, when it came to a show-down, he failed to show even as much individuality and courage of conviction as Mr. Rajagopalachariar who, as the only consistent partisan for the United Nations in the bourgeois leadership, resigned from the working committee.

How can it be supposed that an alliance with such a Pandit Nehru in the form of a "Hail Nehru" brigade in which even the Bolsheviks ought to have joined, would have "widened the breach between Panditji and Gandhiji ?"

Then came the Bombay A.I.C.C. Government published the crop of their Allahabad raid. The Congress leaders produced a slightly *better worded resolution* which nevertheless gave the sanction to a mass civil disobedience, and had it passed by their A.I.C.C. Following this, the Government arrested Congress leaders.

Then followed widespread mass unrest.

Hartals were observed, clashes between Congressmen

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and Congress-led masses and Police occurred. Barricades were erected. Post Offices were set on fire ; telegraph lines were cut ; railways were torn—sabotage began.

In order further to accentuate this "movement" Congress factory owners instigated strikes of the workers ; Mills and factories were closed ; production stopped and workers were carried away by bourgeois saboteurs to participate in a "movement" which was detrimental to their class-interest.

Bombay, Ahmedabad, Nagpur, Delhi, Cawnpore, Allahabad, Benares, Patna, Calcutta, Dacca—all big towns of India suffered the blow to a greater or less extent. So serious was the nature of the "movement" that telegraph communications stopped for a week, train communications were dislocated for nearly a month between Delhi and Calcutta. In places peasants participated in the second wave. Loot, incendiarism, murder, hampering of communications, pro-fascist propaganda—all these went on under the banner of "Patriotism".

Repression followed. Arrests, flogging, shooting, death penal y and collective fines—these were the methods resorted to by Imperialism. Sabotage and repression went on apace, one strengthening the other, and both strengthening pro-Axis and Anti-War feelings.

We denounced the Congress leaders for letting loose the movement.

"This movement is weakening Anti-Fascism, rousing racialism and by provocationist methods demoralising the people". (*People's Front*—No. 3 P. 3).

Again :

"A great damage has been done to the cause of the country by the A.I.C.C. in passing the resolution sanctioning a mass civil disobedience. To-day the interest of the working class and the oppressed peoples of the world is best served by prosecuting the war to its successful and victorious conclusion. Therefore any disturbance that hampers the war-effort goes against the basic interest of the masses."

Documents published by the Government revealed that the apprehensions of the C. C. that possibly at the back of the minds of the major section of the bourgeois leadership there was a desire "to open negotiations with the Japanese victors in case they overran"—a conclusion arrived at by a Marxist, dialectical materialist analysis —was correct.

Gandhists may argue that this is not so. What Gandhiji said was

"If India was freed, her first step would probably be to negotiate with Japan". (*Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 5-8-42).

In other words. Gandhiji's recommendation was not to negotiate with Japan *after* they overran, but *before* they did so. His object was to get India out of war after she had attained freedom and then negotiate a peace between Japan and independent India.

To an Anti-fascist the difference between the two is that between Tweedledum and Tweedledee. Our aim is the destruction of Fascism—not the creation of a utopian independent India. The way to destroy Fascism is to engage it in open combat, not to negotiate a peace with it.

Secondly, anybody, with an ounce of commonsense knows that no member of the United Nations is going to give freedom to India *in order* that she may negotiate a peace with Japan (Even if British Imperialism were mad enough to permit it, China and America would have brought the extreme pressure to bear on the British to prevent it). What then was the only *practical* method of getting freedom to negotiate a peace ? It was to go dead against the United Nations, to engage it in combat, to force a defeat on them and wrest the "Freedom" to negotiate out of their hands. This is commonsense.

The Government publication also revealed that Gandhiji's drait was accepted by the working committee, but that on a tactical ground they accepted the draft resolution of Pandit Nehru which, although it contained words of sympathy and the promise of support to the

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Allies after winning independence, advocated a mass Civil Disobedience. Civil Disobedience was the *substance*: the talk, the words of sympathy with the Allies, only helped the majority leadership to "take advantage of the genuine hatred of the World peoples against Fascism to advance the causes of the Indian bourgeoisie." (C. C. resolution, *People's Front*, No. 1. P. 5). So it was that Pandit Nehru's draft came to be the accepted resolution of the working committee.

The Communist Party of India hailed the document as a *victory* of Nehru over Gandhiji. This they could do because they took the apparent for the real, the shadow for the substance, words for deeds. They renounced the discipline of Marxist dialectics which compel you to evaluate words not by their promise, but by their effects—words taken together with deeds. The place of clear-cut *class* analysis is taken in the literature of that party by a confused mass of sickly sweet sentimentalism. *Judge, not by the anti-fascist ring of the resolution, but by what came in the wake of that resolution* and none has the slightest difficulty in recognising that the acceptance by the bourgeois leadership of Pandit Nehru's resolution did not imply Gandhiji's defeat at Nehru's hands —on the contrary, it implied his success in turning the latter into his dupe.

The true import of the resolution—its anti-United Nations character was understood not by its author, but by the majority of those who voted for it. It was understood and carried into the field of action by Mill-owners, financial magnates, by the bourgeois Press Lords, by speculators, riff-raffs and bourgeois hirelings in the form of unrestricted Civil Disobedience.

Racialism was rampant. Pro-Fascist, anti-communist, anti-Soviet, Anti-Chinese, pro-Subhas propaganda was resorted to by hirelings of the Indian Bourgeoisie in different languages, different places, different disguises.

It was the task of every honest anti-Fascist, every communist to speak the truth in unambiguous terms to the masses even at the risk of their lives. It was necessary, to use the language of our C.C. Resolution,

"to expose the true character of the Congress Resolution as the most hypocritical document produced so far by the Congress". It was a sacred duty of every Communist to tell the bitter truth to the masses. The Labour Party of India issued a statement on the 20th August 1942 from which we quote the following :

> "The Congress leadership—the representatives of the Indian industrialists, financiers, speculators and commercialists—these dwarfs of Indian capitalism are blinded by their narrow class interests. Scared at the prospect of a world revolution on the victory of the anti-fascist forces throughout the world which they themselves are not strong enough to check, they may seek an opportunity to live and thrive under Japan's 'Co-prosperity' sphere under a Fascist hegemony. Some recent Nazi successes in Russia, have bucked them up and they have launched their 'final struggle' with the illusion of establishing their dictatorial rule in India under the shelter of victorious Fascism. It is on this background that we urge the people to oppose this movement and to strengthen the Anti-Fascist Front more and more."—(*People's Front*, No. 3. P. 3.)

Again :

> "The capitalist class also think that by getting civil power from Britain they will set about consolidating themselves. For that reason they absolve themselves of their responsibilities of carrying on the War and may negotiate with the Axis Powers." (*People's Front*, No. 3. P. 4).

Slogan of All-Parties Government.

Our task was not negative. We did not remain satisfied only by exposing the bourgeoisie. In fact such an 'exposure' is useless unless we can place a positive concrete programme before the masses, unless we can give a practical answer to the question of masses. What is to be done ?

The Congress movement accentuated the Anti-war

and Pro-Axis feelings of the masses. Of course it was necessary for us to counter the bourgeois propaganda with that of ours. But something more was necessary to liquidate the sabotage movement. We have said :

> "The present movement has been conceived by the genius of Indian Capitalism ; but its raw materials are hunger, and a nationalism made all the keener by this hunger." (*People's Front*, No. 4. P. 1.)

Therefore, besides exposing the hypocrisy of the bourgeoisie by the method of propaganda and organised action it was our duty to point out to the masses what course was truly in the national interest. It was equally important to tackle the problem of hunger in all seriousness, not only because that is always a major task of the party of the proletariat but also "so that the fifth column cannot make use of the growing poverty to weaken the war effort" (*People's Front*, No. 1. P. 9).

We will not burden this report with details of how we propose to tackle the problem of hunger. The problem is understood : only action and practical step today would really serve the national interests.

To gain national independence is unquestionably in the national interest. It is generally accepted among communists that by defeating fascism through a total people's war, the people of India will not only guarantee their future independence, but also acquire the strength in the process of this war to earn independence.

Thus a people's war on the part of India against fascism is not only in the interests of the proletariat but also of the nation as a whole.

As such our party stressed, even in the midst of a nation-wide movement of sabotage, for a strengthening of the war-effort, for the opening of a Second Front. Statements and leaflets were issued and meetings were held in many places pressing these demands.

It was realised that the form of government which would succeed in building up *the maximum war effort with the greatest speed* would be not the present no-party Government, nor a purely bourgeois Congress-League

Government, but an All-Parties Anti-fascist Government consisting of Congress, Muslim League, Mahasabha, Communists, Bolsheviks, T.U.C., Kisan Sabha, Radical democrats and the domiciled Europeans. Only such a Government will carry with it a guarantee that there would be no negotiated peace ; that war would be carried on with vigour.

Our statement embodying the slogan was issued on the 16th August, '42.

On the 30th August 1942, the *Statesman* published a copyright news embodying the substance of and extracts from a letter written by Comrade Harry Pollitt of the C.P.G.B. to Mr. Churchill demanding a settlement of the Indian problem on the basis of a "Provisional National Government composed of representatives of all political sections in India prepared to co-operate in such Government for the armed defence of India against agression in alliance with the United Nations" (*Statesman*, 30-3-42).

Meanwhile the situation from a military point of view improved in favour of the Allies. Stalingrad held firm like a rock. The Japanese got stuck in the Pacific. Government's attitude stiffened towards the Congress leaders. It turned a deaf ear to the people's demand for the release of Congress Leaders and a settlement. Mr. Rajagopalachariar's request for an interview with the Congress leaders was turned down.

It was clear that the Government was not going to take any initiative since with the improvement of the military situations and the ebbing away of the movement they had no pressing need to do so. The initiative now remained with the people to convince the Congress leadership that the situation calls for an organised retreat. The political statement before C.C. outlines our suggestion as to how the retreat of the bourgeois leadership could be turned not into popular demoralisation but popular victory.

Controversy

Controversy No. 1, arose on the question of our

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attitude towards the Congress movement. It was suggested that instead of opposing the movement we ought to join it, organise it and turn it against Fascism. We gave our reply to this suggestion with a firm "No". (*Ref* : "Not bluff But Revolutionary Effort," *People's Front*, No. 4). This movement of sabotage could only be turned against Fascism if it could be stopped. No honest Marxist could join the movement in order to stop it. Our task was to swim against the current. Our task was to tell masses that sabotage helped no one but the Japanese on the one hand, and the most reactionary section of the British ruling class on the other. Sabotage would lengthen the war and help war profiteers at the expense of the masses. Sabotage would bring difficulties in the development of the Burma offensive. It would help Fascists at the expense of the peoples suffering under the tyranny of Fascism. Sabotage would create obstacles in the way of India's friends abroad, particularly the American and British working class, working for India's freedom. It would strengthen reaction at the expense of the Indian people. How then, could we pretend to support it, join it, and organise it ?

Controversy No. 2, developed around the slogan of "National Government on the basis of a Congress-League Unity" (C.P.I.) versus that of the All-Parties Anti-Fascist Government created on the basis of a joint settlement among all political parties of India.

On the face of it, there appeared to be so little substantial difference between the two that it looked almost like a quibble over words. In reality, however, they were radically different slogans.

The slogan of the C. P. I. presupposes that the big bourgeoisie is anti-fascist and therefore a Government created on the basis of the unity of India's two major bourgeois parties would necessarily be a War Government directed against Japanese and German Fascists. Said P. C. Joshi, G. S. of the C. P. I. in a statement to the News Chronicle representative :

"We appeal to the British democrats not to get

confused by Gandhian pacifism which is particular to him. The rest of the Congress leadership led by Nehru and Azad, is completely Anti-Fascist in every sense of the word. It will enthusiastically rally the Indian people for armed resistance and whole-heartedly unite with the United Nations on the basis of a real National Government right away and for a free India in a free world". (*People's War* No. 5, Page 1, 9-8-42, Joshi's own emphasis).

About Mr. Gandhi's 'pacifism' we shall have something to say later on. But is it a fact that what Joshi calls "Gandhian pacifism" (i. e. that out-look which puts Gandhism in the camp which is opposed to Anti-fascism) is particular only to him? Is it not a fact that during the Allahabad session of the A. I. C. C. the majority of the working Committee passed Gandhi's draft resolution, (which, said Nehru, would make the Congress look pro-Japanese) and that inspite of the opposition of Nehru and Azad? Is it not a fact that this majority later released Pandit Nehru's draft, not because *they* were taken in by its anti-fascist talk, but because the operative part of that draft resolution was the same as their own?

By calling this majority "anti-fascist in every sense of the word" Joshi debases the standard of anti-fascism. He dupes not only substantial sections of the anti-fascists in India, but also confuses India's allies abroad.

Joshi, whose sole function today seems to be to rehabilitate the lost prestige of the bourgeoisie in the anti-fascist camp may be content with a purely bourgeois Government whose effective leadership is not anti-fascist in any sense of the term. We, however believe that the surest guarantee that a Government would carry on war against fascism is that that Governmentwould contain representatives from all the anti-fascist parties and organisations. Such representatives can prevent the bourgeoisie from making an unrestricted use of their power.

A purely bourgeois Government, *even if* it professes to fight fascism cannot mobilise India's resources to the

full. It is the leaders of the people, the leaders of the masses of workers and peasants who can best mobilise and consolidate the power of the people in the struggle against fascism. The bourgeoisie is much too wrapped up in its narrow class interests to be able to improve the livelihood of the people, in order to give them a new vigour to fight fascism. That is why we demand an All-Parties Government, a Government, which would include the peoples' leaders, and not just a Congress League 100% bourgeois Government.

It may be suggested that the presence of representatives from Allied Powers in a Supreme War Council will check any attempts on the part of our bourgeoisie to come to terms with the Axis. While this is perfectly true it cannot be denied that that is only a negative guarantee. The positive task of rousing the people cannot be fulfilled by 'the Supreme War Council representatives. That is the task of the people's leaders in the All-Parties Government.

In the course of private discussions, some lesser C.P.I. comrades have expressed the opinion that Congress itself is not a purely bourgeois organisation, that it contains representatives not only of the bourgeoisie but also of the Communists. If there is Congress-League Government, Communists have a share in that Government through the instrumentality of the Congress.

How a Marxist or even only just a realist can make such an observation, passes our comprehension. The Congress leadership to-day is not a composite one but a purely bourgeois leadership inspite of the majority of Congress votes being non-bourgeois. The "united leadership" dream of the C.P.I. remains unrealised, and will continue to remain unrealised so long as the C.P.I. leadership toes the Nehruist path. To suggest that they could do anything through the instrumentality of Congress democracy is effective only for lulling anti-fascists to sleep.

We will not repeat here all that we have said concerning our slogan of the All-Parties Government, we

shall only touch briefly on this cry of Gandhian "Pacifism", as a foot note.

Gandhism is not pacifism. It is not opposed to violence in general. It is only opposed to those acts of violence which hurt the Indian bourgeoisie. When Congress Ministers professing whole-hearted adherence to Gandhism shot workers in Madras and Bombay, Mahatma Gandhi blessed such class violence.

The Mahatma is not opposed to warfare. Gandhi declared on the eve of the Bombay A. I. C. C. that a powerful mass movement, which would produce swift results, was in his plan. He also declared that a General Strike was in his contemplation. Confident utterances of Sardar Patel also gave ground to the belief that "something" was being planned.

What was being planned? The details of the plan were not released by Congress authorites, but can any one have any doubts as to the essential nature of the Plan? It was obviously a plan to paralyse the war effort.

What else could it be? Could it be a universal prayer to the Almighty for the purification of the hearts of the stiffnecked British? That is what Quaker duchesses would like us to believe, but we, who are familiar with the more earthly and substantial side of the Mahatma know that he has a far too thorough grasp of worldly ways to belive that, as things were, he could obtain "swift results" by prayer or by any means other than that of a threat to paralyse the war effort in a menacingly difficult military situation.

This is not pacifism. This is not opposition to all wars. Undoubtedly it was opposition to the *Allied* war effort, but it was *not* opposition to the *Japanese Fascist* war effort. It was, on the contrary, the greatest possible help the Japanese High Command could have got from anybody in their bid to get India.

That is not "Pacifism"

The habit of portraying Gandhi as a crazy old Saint who is too oldfashioned to be listened to by any body is a cheap journalistic stunt. It can be forgiven in those who have to make thier living by their pen. But it is

unforgivable for any Marxist, not to speak of the General Secretary of a Communist Party to take up that line.

Gandhiji is the leader of a class, Indian bourgeoisie. He is actively supported by the most class conscious sections of the bourgeoisie, not because he is a fine person, but because he has proved himself to be the most efficient pilot of their class-interests.

This is well-known to every Communist. But, in one of the most critical points of Indian History, we are given a new angle on Gandhi. It is, that Gandhian "Pacifism" is a fad particular only to Gandhi. There is no attempt to lay bare the real politicial significance of the so-called "Pacifism". There is no attempt to connect Gandhism with the most class conscious sections of the Indian bourgeoisie. There is no attempt to connect the class politics of the bourgeoisie to the actual movement of sabotage. This is Nehruism, not Marxism.

Whose movement ?

Controversy No. 3 arose on the question : Whose movement is it ?

There was an early attempt on the part of some communists to pass it off as an affair of the hooligans. The suggestion was enthusiastically taken up by a Government propaganda organisation. Millions of posters, handbills and advertisements appeared with the blood-red slogans : Fight Goondas : Needless to say, no one took the slightest notice of these childish make-believes.

An attempt was then made to blame it on the masses.

"The arrest of Congress leaders and the regime of repression which the mad bureaucracy is intensifying every day has called forth a country wide upsurge of people's indignation and mass conflict. Bands of honest but blind patriots are seeking to lead this mass upsurge by organising it as a Congress struggle for freedom of the country. The technique of struggle is, in the main, to organise sabotage of communication....., to stop production and to paralyse the apparatus of adminstration

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by all means." (C.P.I., C.C. Resolution, *People's War* No. 12, 27-8-42).

'Bands' of patriots ! There was no plan, no organisation—impromptu 'bands' of patriots just thought it would be a good idea to lead a mass upsurge as a Congress struggle for freedom. By a happy chance they all hit upon the same technique of struggle "to organise sabotage of communication, to stop production" and so forth.

Such a plea would convince nobody, not even a child.

At times even the People's War permitted the truth to creep into its columns, although it tried its hardest to save the Congress leadership from all blame. Speaking of the hartal in the seeds, cotton and grain market it said.

> "The hartal is being organised from the top as usual. The trading ring was kept normally open but individual traders were informed through their respective associations to do no business. The aim being to bring everything to a standstill. The merchants ..... very soon found that, under the present conditions, the deadlock hits, not so much the bureaucracy, but the people themselves. Thus faith in the trade hartal as a weapon of freedom began to sag. But they found that the boss cliques of the traders' association still insisted on maintaining it. Not only this, more and more coercive method and threats were being used to keep up the hartal" (*People's War* No. 17, Nov. 1st '42).

Surreptitious leaflets swept the country in the name of official Congress Committees. The Peoples' War itself gives an instance :

> "But the most disgusting and dangerous fact is, that it (open Pro-Japanese fifth-column propaganda) finds a veiled echo in the official Congress mouthpiece. Bose is of course not mentioned, but neither is Japanese nor German fascism condemned ..... On the other hand, the treacherous policy of fifth Columnist activity is slyly put across, the railway saboteurs and incendiaries who kill our own people are glorified as "guerrillas". Planned railway

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sabotage is recommended : We want more of that careful planning in advance and planning on a bigger scale so as to act in a larger area simultaneously. The same mouthpiece circulates rumours of infiltration of Fifth Columnists from abroad and shamelessly adds that these are giving themselves out as Congressmen." etc. etc. (*People's War* No. 17. p. I.)

Does all this look like the words of 'bands' of honest and blind patriots ?

The plea was consequently shifted. It was urged that this was the work *not of the bourgeois leadership, but of the* C.S.P., the same party which was to become the basis of a United Socialist party of Communists and Socialists in 1938-39 !

"The official Congress mouthpiece is being used by those who control it at present" (Ibid).

Ruffians, 'bands' of blind patriots, Forward Bloc, the C.S.P. all in turn become the leadership of the movement of sabotage. The only people who are exempt from all blame were "the national leaders".

"Our national leaders are demanding freedom so that they may be able to inspire and mobilise the people for national defence" (*People's War* No. 16.p.l.).

Some one may ask : "Have you any concrete proof that the working Committee majority planned the campaign of sabotage ?

If by proof is meant a piece of paper or an authentic testimony of a sworn witness, all we have to say is that the tracing of such proof is the job of a public prosecutor. We neither have, nor are interested in such proofs. We are not out to unearth a "majority plot". What we want to know is whether there is a political continuity between the behaviour of the bourgeois leadership and the acts of planned sabotage.

We shall start from the Cripps offer. It is plain to everybody that this offer, for what is was worth was made in spite of the opposition of the most reactionary section of the British ruling classes, because of the difficult military situation at the time. The offer was not one

of independence : it was merely an arrangement to improve the war effort.

Gandhiji's comment on the Cripps offer threw a flood of light on the mentality of our bourgeoisie. "What will it fetch me" it said "not after the war but now ?" No interest at all was shown in the value of the Cripps offer in the defence against fascist aggression. The question of power was supreme. The question of war against Fascism was not supreme.

Then, in the general atmosphere of frustration and exasperation following the rejection of the offer the threat to Civil Disobedience was raised. The question of power was pushed one step higher, the question of compelling an unwilling Government to part with power come to the fore. Anti-fascist chatter was kept up by Pandit Jawharlal but nothing at all was *done* to help the war against Fascism. On the contrary, the identity of Fascism *and imperialism* was proclaimed with such frequency that all distinctions between the two disppeared in the eyes of the masses. Rarely if ever was it stressed that the British Government was now in the same camp as the USSR and China and fighting their enemy.

So, war now threatened on two fronts : against Fascism and Imperialism. In actual practice, war against fascism was impossible except in alliance with imperialism. So the only practical war which could be fought was with the bird in hand : Imperialism.

To fight imperialism, why ? To compel it to part with power. How ? By mass signatures ? Strong as the faith of some camp followers of the Indian bourgeoisie in the potency of a battle for mass signatures, the Working Committee knew the limitations of such methods of warfare. The Working Committee recommended Civil Disobedience. A General Strike was in Gandhiji's contemplation. It would bring "swift results."

The bourgeois leaders knew that the country was threatened from both frontiers by the most powerful and the most swift-moving aggressors the world has ever known. They knew that a General Strike, a Civil Disobedience would disorganise the rear and, if successful,

give invaluable aid to the invaders. They knew that there was an acute hunger in the country. They knew that there were active fifth columnists just looking for such an opportunity. They knew that among our people in general there was little understanding of the nature of this war. Mahatma Gandhi personally knew that the C.S.P. *an organisation within the Congress fold had prepared a complete plan of total Sabotage.* He had seen the plan himself with his own eyes.

And yet these "patriotic""national" leaders had no hesitation in placing before the AICC a resolution giving sanction to mass Civil Disobedience.

On the second day of the AICC meeting Pandit Nehru declared that a rumour was going round that immediately after the AICC meeting was over Congress leaders would be arrested. The leaders knew that if the rumour turned to be true a wild movement would break out and it would be controlled by the most organised, most centralised and most determined saboteurs. Yet did they withdraw the Civil Disobedience threat ? No.

Soon after this, they were arrested. Did the pacifist Mahatma Gandhi, guessing the kind of hell that would be let loose make any effort to let it be known that he forbade the masses to take part in any act of sabotage ? No, he did not.

There was little need to guess. Pretty soon the country was drowned in bloody violence and repression. Did Mahatama Gandhi from his prison call out to the people in his own name to stop ? No, neither did he nor did those other leaders who were "anti-fascists in every sense of the term".

Perhaps they had done so and Government had withheld their messages to the People.

A ludicrious suggestion. There are the Government propaganda organisations covering the country with bits of paper which nobody looks at asking the people to "Fight Goondas". Would they not jump at it if they could say "Stop Sabotage ! Gandhiji forbids you !"?

The plain truth is that the reign of sabotage is the

continuation or the consistent policy of the majority of the working committee. Politically, the movement of sabotage is their movement and only they can stop it from *within*. It is sometime urged that the leaders have made a 'mistake'. They *have* made a political mistake, but it is necessary for us to see in what essential they have made an error of judgement. They knew very well what would happen in consequence of their civil disobedience movement. Is it possible that they imagined that a threat would be enough to compel the British Government to part with power? We do not think so. We believe that the leadership knew well that the threat would have to be carried into practice. Where they went wrong was in imagining that with the Japanese and Germans steadily advancing, the British Government would not risk a total paralysis of the Indian war effort. There would conseqently be swift results. That was their error. They underestimated the Soviet Union and overestimated Japan's sea power. This and only this was their 'mistake'.

Indignant comrades ask, "Why do you blame Congress alone? Why don't you blame Imperialism?"

The fundamental task of a Marxist Party is to protect the members of the Party from all forms of deviation, all forms of non-proletarian influences. How do these deviations express themselves? They do so in the form of preference, attachment or infatuation for this or that non-proletarian policy. We criticise the bourgeoisie, not because we hope by our arguments to convert *them*, but in order to correct our own comrades and the masses which follow us from the error of attaching themselves to the bourgeoisie.

Further, these deviations are not abstract ones. They develop on concrete issues and at critical times assume an 'epidemic' form, that is, a number of comrades are infected with a common complaint.

What is the concrete form of the present deviations? Are there any comrades among us who rejoice in the imperialist possession of India? No, there aren't. None of our comrades are infatuated with Imperialism or

the Imperialist policy. The concrete form of deviations which at one time took an epidemic form in the Party was an attachment to the policy of the bourgeoisie, to the habit of adopting Nehru's slogans as proletarian slogans. That is why we had to pay particular attention to the role of the bourgeoisie.

Secondly, it is a fact that we have to oppose Imperialism. But, not on the same ground as that on which we opposed it before. Then, our strategic objective was national independence. Now it is the destruction of fascism without achieving which we cannot advance to independence. Then we were fighting tooth and nail against the war. Now, enhancing the war-effort is our sacred duty. Now our duty is to remove all obstacles in the path of a speedy defeat of fascism, of a second front in Europe, etc., etc. A part of these obstacles is the imperialist way of handling the war effort, but the most pressing obstacle still is the sabotage movement. That is why the main fire of our criticism has been directed against those responsible for this sabotage movement.

But, is not Imperialism too responsible for the movement of sabotage? Why did it not part with power? The answer is simple: because it is Imperialism. Did any man in his sense imagine that invectives, mass signatures or threats to Civil Disobedience would make Mr. Winston Churchill hand India over to anyone?

We did not.

"The most reactionary elements of the British Government were clearly opposed to any substantial change, even in the face of danger. The line of reasoning of this set was possibly as follows: If Japan overran India the combined might of Britain and America might regain it for the British Government. But if India was granted freedom, or substantial powers which would help her to secure freedom at the end of the war, the country would be lost to the British Empire." (*People's Front*, No. 1, Page 3).

It is not the habit of imperialism to "part with power" It is the task of the people to win it. They can do so,

not by praying or cursing but by ensuring their advance to power by following the correct strategy and tactics, at every stage and turn of history. Today the correct strategy demands subordinating everything to the struggle against fascism. Looked at this way the British Government, with all its faults, is in the right camp. The bourgeois leadership, on the other hand, by giving sanction to mass Civil Disobedience chose to work in the wrong camp. That is why our main fire is directed against the bourgeois leadership. It is their line which has given the Government the excuse to resort to repression. It is their line which has given the fifth column the excuse to popularise every form of pro-fascist treachery in the name of Congress. The people must be won over from that line. That is why we are most ruthless in our criticism of that line.

Another C.P.I. slogan which infected some of our comrades is "No effective resistance is possible without National Government." We have exposed the defeatist nature of this slogan in the article *"Face Facts and Fascism"*. (*People's Front*, No. 5).

"All Anti-fascists are generally agreed that there is no telling *when* an Axis Power would attack a country. What is certain is that it would attack when it feels reasonably sure of success.

The Axis Powers would naturally not wait for us to "solve" our "deadlock" and construct a Cabinet endowed with "powers to organise defence". They would attack when their own preparations were complete.

It is this knowledge which prompts us *to take up whatever weapons of defence we have, and prepare to defend.* It is this knowledge which impels us to forge *a Unity of all the forces which are willing to fight fascism.*

If Japan invades us we say unequivocally, we shall resist. And we must resist with the absolute conviction that we *can* resist, irrespective of what Messrs Amery, Jinnah and Gandhi think, whether we have a National Government or not, whether the "deadlock" is solved or not.

This is commonsense. To say that we can *not* defend

ourselves *unless* we have a placated bourgeoisie or a de-bureaucratised Government is to disarm the people, because placed as we are we may be compelled to fight Japan in spite of these encumbrances.

No anti-fascist would dare to suggest that if the worst comes to the worst and our country is invaded before we have "solved" the "deadlock" we should *surrender* ! And yet there are people who do suggest it in practice, by saying that *no* effective resistance is possible without a National Government ; in other words, unless there is a National Government, resistance is futile.

Such cannot be the logic of an anti-fascist.

It is the task of the anti-fascist today to imbue the Indian people with a desperate courage, to tell them that our resistance against Japan must not be conditional upon anything, because the alternative to resistance is surrender and annihilation.

That is the firm rock on which we stand."

We know that an All-Parties' Government pledged to fight the war in alliance with the United Nations would immensely improve the war effort. That is why we support all efforts to bring such a Government into being, namely Rajaji's attempt to see Gandhiji, or Sir T. B. Sapru's effort for an All-Parties Conference. But our support to the war effort is not *conditional* upon the formation of such a Government. We are prepared to fight unconditionally, even under the worst possible conditions.

On the 15th December, 1941 the C.P.I. too declared their *unconditional* support to the war effort because the Allies, including the British Government were "no more conducting a war that was unjust and was now in the camp of progress" etc. (Resolution of the Polit Bureau, C.P.I. 15-12-41).

Condemning themselves for having refused to support the war unconditionally during the period 22nd June '41 to 15th Dec. '41, the resolution observed :

"We looked at the war from the point of view of narrow bourgeois-nationalism and theorised that

Britain was still conducting an Imperialist war and that real aid to the Soviet people could be rendered by the British and Indian people only when a people's Government was established in Britain and freedom was won by the Indians. We repeated parrot-like phrases like 'Hitler is our main enemy', and said that the imperialist war has to be *completely* transformed into a peoples' war, but stuck fast to the bourgeois-nationalist slogan that India could help the Soviet Union only as a free country".

From the nature of this self-criticism one might have imagined that it would be impossible for the C.P.I. to retrace its steps.

And yet, hark !

"The nation," says the Editor of the *People's War*, "must secure National Government from foreign Imperialism. A National Government acting as the representative of a United India is the *only* (our emphasis) guarantee of its liberation, of national defence, of saving the people from defeatism and helplessness". (*People's War*, 9-8-42)

Must the Bourgeoisie fight Fascism ?

Yet another controversy of a pedantic nature arose within our party. It was this : the Japanese aggressor, if it succeeds in grabbing hold of India, would wipe out the Indian bourgeoisie, so the very circumstances are going to compel our bourgeoisie to turn anti-fascist. We have dealt with this question in our article *National Government for Resistance.* (*People's Front*, No. 4).

It is true that fascism, if it overcame the Soviet Union, China and the rest of the Allied forces, would reduce to slavery not only the big bourgeoisie of India but also that of other countries. But not before they have reduced the Allies and destroyed the Soviet Union ! So long as the war goes on, so long as they are threatened with the serious offensive potentialities, of the Allies, the Axis Powers will continue the tactic of maintaining the big bourgeoisie of each conquered country as their

wartime Allies. In all countries of capitalist Europe and Asia, the Fascists have succeeded in bringing about an arrangement with the big-bourgeoisie of the enslaved parts. Who are Quisling, Laval, Antonescu, Mussolini, Wang Ching Wei, Bipul Songram and Ba Maw? They are all agents of the bigger sections of the bourgeoisie and other vested interests in the Fascist occupied countries of Europe and Asia.

These big owners of bourgeois wealth have found their property seized by Fascism and have been befuddled into believing that the fascists will come out victorious in this war. They have been unable to link up their fate with their temporarily retreating patriotic armies, and have been loath to destroy their own private property or even to leave it temporarily behind the Japanese lines. The result is that they have delivered their nations, their own countrymen, even their ultimate future into the hands of the Fascist vampires in an attempt to save their narrow, immediate interests.

We observed in *People's Front* No. 4 :

"If the logic of history were so mechanical every class in history would have always taken the 'correct' decision in every crisis. It would have been impossible for one class to have overthrown another.

On the contrary classes do take measures from time to time to guard their *immediate* interests, measures, which ultimately prove fatal to themselves.

Nobody could say that the decision of the Chinese bourgeoisie to surrender Manchuria to the Japanese proved beneficial to themselves in the long run. None would dare to say today that the policy of non-interference in Spain and of appeasement towards the Axis proved beneficial to the British and French bourgeoisie

Why should it be insisted then that it is impossible for the Indian bourgeoisie to incline towards 'sympathy' for Japan in this crisis? If some of the bourgeoisie are convinced that Axis will win the war, why should it be beyond the range of

possibilities for them to try to keep in with the Axis Powers ? If, as they imagine, Japan wins, would they not stand a greater chance of saving their sacred property by kowtowing than by showing resistance to the Japanese ?

The ideology of the bourgeoisie is buried in its money bags. It is anti-fascist neither subjectively, nor objectively" (September, 1942)

The Royist Position :

The Radical Democrats look upon the Indian bourgeoisie as Indian Fascists. They do not realise that the present pro-fascist policy of the bourgeoisie can be smashed with the tide of the war turning decisively in favour of the Allies, with the growing popular disillusionment in the magic power of the Mahatma for winning Independence swiftly and with the swelling of the Anti-fascist movement in the country. Therefore, instead of solving the crisis by intensified war efforts, by all-parties negotiations and the effort to bring into being an all-parties Government they press for the 'civil war' being fought to the finish, for complete annihilation of the bourgeoisie as a political force, which, of course, is impossible in the present historical phase. Thus M. N. Roy writes :

"When the advance-guard of the Japanese invader is operating throughout the country (meaning the Congress) with the intentions of paralysing the defence of the country, the Government propaganda machinery proposes to create a *United* National War Front against Japan ! It is completely disregarded that nationalism finds an ally in the Axis, and therefore must operate as Fascism in India. You cannot fight Japanese Fascism in alliance with Indian Fascism.....The Civil War has broken out in India. That perhaps is the most outstanding fact at the opening of the Fourth Year of the war. Recognise that fact, wage the

civil war with ruthlessness and victory will be ours". ((*Independent India*—13-9-42 P. 432-33).

Thus while the C. P. I. aims at solving the deadlock by liquidating Imperialism, the Radical Democrats strive to do so by liquidating the Congress. Both are wrong, for both of them adopt a method which is unrealisable and therefore futile. Therefore, both of them are helping in the perpetuation of this state of affairs instead of actually liquidating the crisis.

On the 3rd October 1942, in explaining why we were advocating an All-Parties Government with the Congress leaders whom we are denouncing as Pro-Fascist, we wrote the following :

Why All-Parties Government ?

"A cynic might conceivably argue thus :

"Well, if you think that the bourgeoisie are convinced of a fascist victory and are making preparations to acclimatize themselves to a possible Fascist World, why do you communists want an all-Parties Government in which the majority will certainly be composed of representatives from the Bourgeoisie ?"

There is no doubt that we do want an All-Parties Government—to fight the Fascists.

We demand :

"The release of Congress leaders and the establishment of an All-Party Anti-Fascist Government". (*Statement of L.P.I. 20th August, People's Front No. 3. p. 3. col. 3.*)

As soon as comrade Harry Pollitt's statement came out in the press we brought out a special issue of the *People's Front*, reprinted the statement, andsaid that we accept the position taken by Comiade Pollitt without any sort of reservation. The keynote of the statement was the demand for the creation of :

"A Government of the armed defence of India against aggression in alliance with the United Nations, participation in such a Government to be open to representatives of all leading political sections, but with

no right of any section to veto or shipwreck the scheme by refusal to participate." (*Statesman*, Aug. 30. 1942).

Why do we accept the demand for the creation of a National Government in which the bourgeoisie would be a majority ?

We do so because,

(i) Such a Government would be formed with the *expressly declared* intention of the "armed defence of India against aggression in alliance with the United Nations". Any attempt by any of the participants in such a Government to go back on it would be recognised by the masses of Indian people as a treacherous act.

(ii) The presence of the anti-fascist elements in the Government will prevent those bourgeois representatives who advocate "peace with Japan" from utilising the Governmental machinery in a way which will weaken the war-effort and harm the interests of the Indian people.

(iii) The Indian people have no real sympathy with fascism. Not all the people who are engaged in acts of sabotage today are conscious fifth columnists. There are many among them, who are doing it because they want independence, because they have been misled into believing that sabotage will get them independence.

Even fifth columnists who are either in the Japanese pay, or are pro-fascists by conviction dare not peddle their fascism to the masses. They have to say "Help Japan ! *Japan will give you independence !!*"

When the masses realise that Japan is an enemy of that independence which they seek, they will be willing to resist Japan, they will not be turned back from the path of resistance.

If we have a National Government for resistance composed of Congress, Muslim League and genuinely anti-fascist elements, there will be no important section of our people left-out of it openly to advocate a policy of sabotage. The fifth column will again have to go underground. In such an atmosphere it will be considerably easier for the anti-fascist forces to build up a

total popular resistance to the Axis Powers. So, closed in on all sides by a people determined to guarantee their independence through a fight to the finish with fascism, the bourgeoisie will find no loophole for escape from a policy of resistance to the Axis forces.

(iv) We say :

"Opportunistic sections within our bourgeoisie would follow whichever course is in their judgement best calculated to guarantee their possessions. If the war favours the Allies, they would support the Allies". (*People's Front, Special Issue, P. 2 Col, 2*).

According to the reckoning of the bourgeoisie today a fascist victory is inevitable. So their haste to win control of India and force a peace with Japan before India has actually been overrun. We communists, however are convinced that the forces of Resistance in India i. e. the people *plus* the allied Armed forces, *can* resist Japan, given a unity of purpose and the determination never to submit.

A national Government for resistance guarantees in practice this unity of purpose. It unites the people behind Resistance. As such it creates the necessary basis *for materially changing the course of the war*. This material change will affect the mental attitude of the bourgeoisie. The Axis Powers, after a successful Indian counter-blow will not appear as invincible. More and more sections of the opportunistic bourgeoisie will break away from the "surrender to the Axis" camp and join with the Pro-Allied camp. The adventurist elements who are determinedly Pro-Axis would be cornered and isolated once again. The Anti-Fascist front will become more powerful and more consolidated.

It is with the object of strengthening Indian Resistance that we advocate an All-Parties Government. We know that we cannot just help form a *purely* Congress-League bourgeois Government and then trust to luck. Our express object is the formation of a *front*, an all-national anti-fascist front, for the armed defence of India. The formation of an All-Parties Government is a step towards the forming of this front."

National Unity :

Another popular controversy inside the party centered around the C.P.I. slogan of "National Unity".

All anti-fascists desire national unity behind resistance to Fascism by which we mean that we wish all the classes and communities to support the war against fascism.

Where differences appear however is on :

(a) what is the starting point, for building up Unity ;
(b) what is the process for building up Unity ;
(c) whether the slogan in the form presented by other political parties and groups assist or oppose the building up of real unity.

The C.P.I. position as far as we have been able to understand it is this :

The most substantial part of our people are within the two great organisations : Congress and Muslim League. Differences between the leadership of the two organisations over the question of Pakistan is keeping them divided into two hostile camps. As soon as this quarrel is dissolved, the two unite. As soon as they unite other minor groups rush to this united body to link their fate with this formidable majority. National Unity is achieved, National Government follows, effective resistance against Fascism begins.

Congress-League unity is the starting point for building up effective resistance to fascism.

What is the basis of Congress-League dissensions ? As we hinted in Red Flag Vol II No. 1 (July, '41) this conflict is between those sections of the bourgeoisie which have already entrenched themselves in the industrial field, and others who have accumulated capital through commerce but are kept out of the industries by the powerful ring of the existing industrial magnates. (It is interesting to note that there is no conflict between the Parsee and Hindu capitalists because the Parsees are old and solid comrades of the Hindus in the industrial field.)

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The CPI suggests that our task is to bring about Congress-League unity. Which means that the proletariat must get busy finding a solution to the existing conflict, to heal the divisions of the bourgeoisie. They must persuade the big industrial magnates to allow the new bourgeoisie to slice off a portion from the "territory" of the former in order to have within it an unrestricted development of its capital. That and not the self-determination of minorities is the true significance of Pakistan in bourgeois eyes.

In what circumstances is it possible to compel a bourgeoisie to give up a slice from its own economic territory to a rival ? It is possible when the bourgeoisie is scared, is faced with the prospect of losing its power.

If the Congress leadership saw it was going to lose something vital unless it came to terms with the leadership of the League, a prospect of settlement would loom in the horizon.

What vital thing could the Congress leadership lose ? Clearly its influence over the masses. If the Congress leadership saw that by their pig-headedness they were going to lose their following to another leadership, the working class leadership, then they would move for a settlement.

Thus it is clear that we cannot hope for any "reform" of the major bourgeoisie form within itself—it will not move out of its own accord towards a settlement. Only fear at the success of the working class leadership in winning over the people will make the bourgeois settle its internal quarrel.

The *starting point* then is not Congress-league unity but the "outside factor"—the massing of the people under the banner of the working class.

The working class leadership may send appeals to the bourgeoisie for unity, but there is little chance of those appeals bearing any fruit unless it can rally larger and larger sections of the people under its banner.

The CPI would say : that is exactly what we are doing. We are collecting mass signatures and explaining

to the people that without Congress-League unity nothing ever can be done.

In other words, they are telling the bourgeoisie: "Don't worry, we shall not do anything which might lead to a weakening of your influence over the masses. We shall shout 'No solution without the Congress.' We shall drum into the ears of the masses that no effective resistance is possible without a national Government based on Congress-League unity. We shall refuse to form a united front of all anti-fascists under working class leadership. We shall fritter away our energy in collecting individual signatures. We shall do our utmost to save the bourgeois leadership from collapse."

That is what it amounts to. By that process there can be no real national unity.

We Bolsheviks say, the starting point in the building up of national unity for resistance is the united front of all anti-fascists at the initiative and under the leadership of the working class. The vital factor for national unity is not the unity of the bourgeoisie but the unity of the working class, and its alliance with peasantry. The process of building up unity is not to preserve intact the leadership of the bourgeoisie over the masses, but the winning away of the masses from under the influence of the bourgeoisie to that of the anti-fascist people's front. The policy of developing this unity is not to lie on our oars until the bourgeoisie is united, but to engage in the actual building up of resistance with whatever resources we have. This unity will grow in strength by telling the masses, not that no effective resistance is now possible, but that the anti-fascist parties and their followers together with the Allied armed forces can effectively resist the Japs. Only that way can we build up real National Unity behind resistance. The C.P-I. way is a barren method which merely ends in subordinating the people to the bourgeois leadership.

It is important in this connection to clarify what we mean by resistance. Half-baked intellectuals in India think that the only form of resistance is the defence of a village against invaders by primitive weapons. Actually

the thing is much wider than that. It is possible that Japan will never succeed in making a land invasion of India. It would in that case be impossible to try our primitive weapons in our own villages. It would be necessary then to carry the war into the enemy's country. Most of the fighting will be done by regular armies with modern weapons. It would be necessary to ensure supplies, to maintain production, to keep up efficiency. Recruiting in the regular armies must be more brisk. The civil defence of the cities, factories, docks etc. must be brought up to scratch. Morale will have to be maintained. The food question must be tackled with energy. Anti-fascist propaganda squads must be sent to the frontal areas, and even behind enemy lines. That would be the meaning of resistance in an offensive operation.

It is fashionable among some comrades to point to the "Chinese example" in connection with the building up of unity. And what is the lesson of the Chinese experience ? It is : (a) that when the Chinese bourgeoisie in 1927 opened an attack on the working masses and their communist leadership, communists *refused to surrender, refused to be goaded into the liquidationist policy of Chen, the then general Secretary of the C.P.C., refused to be coerced into submitting to the counter revolutionary policy of the bourgeoisie.* The bourgeoisie broke the United Front against Imperialism and Feudalism forged by the great revolutionary, Dr. Sun Yat Sen, and tried to pass off their open dictatorship, their demand of the subordination and even annihilation of the communists, their compromise with foreign imperialisms and reactionary feudal elements, all in the name of establishing "national unity", The Communists refused to be taken in by the false and hypocritical bourgeois slogan. They retreated to the hills and formed there a new type of government, the Soviet Government.

(b) When the bourgeoisie carried on a military campaign against the Soviets in the name of forging "national unity under a central national government" *the communists did not surrender.* They fought back,

inflicted military defeats on the bourgeoisie and won over bourgeois armies to their side.

(c) When the Soviets were completely encircled by bourgeois armies under the guidance of German military experts, the communists did not surrender. A heroic little rearguard, under the command of the worker Han Ying remained and fought from inside the trap and the main army broke through. Neither army surrendered to the bourgeoisie. The main army trekked over six thousand miles of difficult country and re-established themselves in a place *from which they could go at the Japs with their own resources and on their own initiative.*

(d) Bourgeois armies chased them even there. Communists won over the Manchurian armies and their leader, Chang Hsueh Liang. When Chang arrested Chiang Kai Shek, the communists persuaded Chiang to turn right about from fighting Reds over to making peace with the Reds and fighting Japs.

(e) During this process, the situation had materially altered. The China which the bourgeoisie took over from the Manchus was no longer the same. Manchuria went, Jehol went, Hopei, Chahar, Shantung and Suiyuan were partly gone and what remained looked very much like going.

The Japanese had broken every peace which they had made. Every time the bourgeois armies engaged in a campaign with the Reds, the Japanese made fresh demands and fresh advances. This process created a breach within the bourgeoisie. The most reactionary elements were heading definitely towards accepting puppet positions under the overlordship of the Japanese. While more and more sections of the masses, of the petty-bourgeoisie and even of the warlords, were beginning to see that the policy of resistance which the Communists had been carrying on, *in words and in deeds* was the only means of saving themselves. It is necessaty to underline the part of the phrase 'and in deeds', because ever since the attack on Shanghai and Manchuria in 1931 the Communists have advocated a policy of resistance to imperialism *and taken part in the actual*

resistance to Jap attacks. When under orders from the Central Government the Tungpei army retreated from Manchuria in a body, Communists remained with the people and organised formidable partisan warfare. The stiff fight that the 19th Route Army gave to the Jap attack at Shanghai was not due to the order of the Central Government, but due to the comradely alliance inside the army of Communists and Anti-Imperialists. The Central Government, be it noted, withdrew the army when it showed fight, purged it of communist elements and used it later to fight Reds.

What lessons can we draw from this? We learn that National Unity does not come from mere appeals. It is the result of a definite historical evolution. Before the Chinese bourgeoisie were convinced of the necessity for unity against Japanese aggression, they had to suffer defeats at the hands of the Chinese Red Army, they had to lose Manchuria and North China, they had to be forced to come to terms with the people. We also learn that the Communists, while they demanded unity for resistance always took account of the existing situation even when it compelled them to defend themselves from bourgeois aggression with arms. We learn that communists were not deluded by the empty phrase "National Unity behind Central Government" when the Central Government followed the path of compromise with the aggressor. Chinese Communism refused to surrender the independence of its line. Chinese Communism did not drum it into the ears of the masses that "no effective resistance was possible" (until a United bourgeois leadership ruled over the country) *but showed the people in practice how successful resistance was possible* even under the most adverse circumstances. Chinese Communism had to transform National unity for compromise under the open dictatorship of the bourgeoisie into its opposite, namely, National Unity for resistance under the leadership of the proletariat in a popular anti-Jap front, before it could do anything with it.

These are the lessons we learn from China.

10th January, 1943.

POLITICAL STATEMENT

The following Political statement was issued by the Central Executive Committee of the Labour Party of India which concluded its session in Calcutta on the 19th January, 1943.

Doubts Liquidated

Axis defeat is now assured.

The eventual defeat of the Axis was already foreseen on June 22, 1941, when Hitler attacked Russia thus transforming the imperialist war into a Peoples' war. Any doubts which lingered were liquidated on December 6 in the same year when (i) Japan made war on Britain and America ; (ii) the Soviets opened their powerful counter-offensive. The first of these further extended and consolidated the Anti-Fascist forces : the second event proved that the Soviet Union was capable not only of defending its own but also of carrying war into the enemy's camp.

What was the basis of our reckoning when we declared that Hitler and his associates would eventually be defeated ?

Superiority of Reserves

The first thing which impressed one when trying to strike a balance of forces between the two belligerents was the enormous superiority of reserves on the side of the United Nations in material and manpower.

The Soviet Method

Though this was important, it was not really the deciding factor. The factor which gave absolute guarantee to the ultimate defeat of the Axis Powers was the

ability of the Soviet people under Stalin's leadership to demonstrate in a practical manner how the fascist mode of warfare could be resisted.

The peoples of the world knew not only that the United Nations had superiority in resources, but also had, in the Soviet Union a superiority in fighting ability and leadership. The Soviet Union inspired the world people with the belief that if all the Allied countries made immediate utilisation of their enormous resources in actual combat—after the Soviet fashion—they could save mankind an extra year or two of warfare by bringing about a *speedy end of fascism*. The Soviet Union proved that it was uneconomical in the long run to plan a long war ; that the correct tactic was not to "wear out" Hitler by planned withdrawals or by lengthening his lines of communication. The most practical, economical and speedy method of destroying Hitler was to crush him in frontal combat—now.

A Deadly Third Front

"Hitler's defeats on the Soviet front have given a new hope to the crushed millions of Europe. This hope is finding expression in outbreaks of sabotage and attacks on German soldiers. If the war is made to drag on, the people will lose hope again and become passive. That is why we want a Second Front now." (*Comrade Karim—meeting of Howrah workers, 1st, Nov,' 42.*)

" 'The rear of the German Army is begining to crack in all directions.' (Lozovsky). The landing of allied troops will be the signal for the European people to rise against their fascist enslavers—to open a *deadly third front*" (*Battle for Land, Bread and Freedom, P. 39*).

A false Notion

To a superficial observer it may seem as though the dragging on of war is of advantage to the Allies, because while it compels Hitler to use up his reserves, it permits the Allies to conserve theirs. Such a notion is doubly

false. The loss of Malaya has been a loss of rubber. The loss of France has meant a loss of deposits of iron and bauxite. To permit these to remain in the hands of the Axis Powers for a longer period than we can help is of no benefit to us at all. Besides, an actual combat for an uncertain future date means to lengthen the war at the *expense of the oppressed peoples in Europe.* We, who are outside Hitler's domains can conserve what we have by postponing action, but Hitler takes it out of our allies in France, in Czechoslovakia, in Yugoslavia, in the occupied parts of the Soviet Union. They lose more than we gain by a long war.

And again, by postponing simultaneous action we heighten the losses of the Soviet heroes who are engaged in offensive combats whenever they are not on the defensive—heroes who taught us to think not in terms of 1944 or' 45 but of a Fascist defeat in 1942.

How Hitler will reach his end

A factor of the greatest importance is the manner in which Hitler will reach his end.

Hitlerism may end by the entry of Allied troops into Berlin, that is, by a purely military defeat. Or, he may end by the revolt of the German people in alliance with the oppressed peoples of Europe. A purely military defeat might lead to yet another war. A defeat by revolution will create a new State on the ashes of militarist Germany, as the Soviet Union came forth from the ruin of the Czarist Russian Empire. Such a Germany, a Soviet Germany, would be a joint guarantor of a peoples' peace and an enemy of future wars. *Only such a Germany can ensure freedom for its people after the war.*

A mighty effort now to bring about a speedy end of fascism will accelerate the growth of the forces of revolution re-awakened by the powerful resistance of the Soviet.

A Second Front Now

A second front will compel the Nazis to transfer a considerable part of their forces from the Soviet front.

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it will speed up the Soviet offensive and hasten the growth of revolutionary forces in Europe.

A second front now will draw off some of the forces from the centre of Germany and vital parts of occupied Europe and so concretely help the revolutionary forces there which are now working under a severe handicap.

A second front now will end the war in the best possible manner from the point of view of the world people. It will bring forth the most favourable combination of Hitler's military defeats with the revolutionary uprising of the peoples oppressed by Hitler. Under its impact, forces of revolution in Europe will be able to wipe out Hitlerism from within even before the Allied forces enter Berlin. Peace will be signed not between the victor and vanquished powers, but between the united nations and their allies, the newly created free revolutionary governments of Europe. All hopes of the Chamberlainites to impose an imperialist peace on the "vanquished" peoples of Europe will then vanish in the air.

The Danger of Dragging on the war

If the war drags on, not only the people oppressed by Hitler, but even the peoples of Allied countries might lose heart and become indifferent and war-weary. They might be reconciled to any kind of peace, even an imperialist peace at the end of the war, a peace which will contain the seeds of future wars within it.

All these conditions call for a plan for a *speedy end of fascism* along the path of allied offensive of a second front in Europe, of a land offensive through Burma towards the Far East.

Course of the war retraced

Lest one imagines that the course of a war is immutable, that no plan can shorten it, let us for a moment retrace the course of this war.

In its stalemate phase, the war did not show any progress because the most reactionary elements in British

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ruling circles were planning to stop the war with Germany and turn the war into the Anglo-German attack against Soviet Union.

After the conclusion of the Finnish War and particularly after the fall of France, the hopes of turning the War into an anti-Soviet War vanished.

In the subsequent phase, we see two distinct types of warfare. One which began in France was a plan of withdrawal and an extension of the field of operations. But we also saw a totally different type of warfare in the Battle of Britain. Here was no talk of withdrawals, of wearing out the enemy, of extending the war. One heard instead, of *planning to Fight street by street, of successful air defence against three to one and five to one superiority.* Scraps turned into weapons, pots and pans became aeroplanes.

The Battle of Britain was an example, even in the imperialist phase of the war, of *how a war could be shortened* by seeking help from where help may be forthcoming—from the people.

What was possible then is all the more possible in the present phase of Peoples' war. The war may be shortened—with the help of the people ; a speedy end of fascism will yield a people's peace.

Axis thrown to Defensive

The Axis have been thrown on the defensive. The Soviets are on the march. The British and American forces, aided by Frenchmen, are proceeding with the task of clearing the Southern Mediterranean seaboard of all Axis elements. If they succeed, and there is no reason why they should not, the lines of communications between the Allied strongholds will be considerably shortened—much to the disadvantage of the Axis forces.

Yet it is clear that this campaign will not lead, in the immediate future, to a Second Front in Europe. Therefore the popular demand for the speedy opening of a Second Front in Europe still remains in force.

Independence of Burma

Nearer home the problem is even more complicated. The land offensive in Burma has started, but it creeps on at a lazy Burmese pace. It is possible that the African offensive has drawn off some of the forces which would have strengthened the Burma offensive, but it is also true that because of its *purely military nature* it lacks the vigour it might otherwise have had. The campaign carries with it no promise of independence for the Burmese people. It is merely a feat of arms in which the masses of the Burmese people have no part to play. Further, the push into Burma lacks the support which the Indian people could have given it.

To attempt to correct these two faults, in order speedily to re-opon the road which links China with India, is the task of Indian anti-fascists.

For People's victory : People's Peace

There is a feeling even among some anti-fascists that since the Allies are bound to win now even without the help of the Indian people, our duty now is to revert to the old form of struggle against imperialism. Such a notion is extremely mechanical. Fascism remains the main enemy of the peoples of the world. Its destruction still remains our supreme strategic aim. The only difference between our estimate to-day and that we made after the Soviet war began is that while we were preparing then for a defensive war, we now plan for the offensive. Then we were opposed to retreats and withdrawals. Now we are opposed *to all forms of delay in bringing about the speedy end of Fascism. Our aim is to speed up the offensive, to turn military victories into a liberation of the peoples, to give the offensive its true political objectives* to gain new allies for the United Nations from the colonial peoples. Our task in this phase is speedily to win the war in a people's way with the co-operation of the peoples and to march forward to the people's peace.

Situation in India

It is clear that as things are in India there is little likelihood of the Indian people's representatives sharing in the peace. Certain avowedly Anti-Fascist parties and their followers, mainly the working-class, are supporting the war-effort against heavy odds. Certain other parties are opposing it with sabotage. In the people, generally speaking, there is little realisation of the nature of this war. The people are at best indifferent, at the worst, sullen.

India can neither play a part in this war nor share in the peace which will follow if this state of affairs continues.

The practical way out

No purpose would be served in trying to apportion the blame for this sorry state. What we must apply our energies to, is finding a practical way out. We outline below what we believe is the only practical scheme ; that :

1. The Congress leaders declare their non-adherance to the present movement of sabotage and order Congressmen and Congress supporters all over India to withdraw from it. No question of prestige is involved in it because they did not initiate the movement officially. This important practical step is necessary in order to isolate the fifth-column which is parading and working in Congress' name.

2. The Government order release of Congress leaders.

3. With Congress leaders released a fully-representative All-Parties Conference is summoned where immediate practical steps are taken for forming an All-Parties Government with an agreed plan for the prosecution of the war.

4. This plan for the prosecution of the war should contain an agreement and that the following peoples'

demands be incorporated in the plan of the All-Parties Government.

(i) Civil liberties for the full mobilisation of the people behind the war.

(ii) Satisfaction of the economic demands of the workers as contained in the charter of the All-India Trade Union Congress.

(iii) The satisfaction of the *immediate* demands of the peasantry as formulated by the All India Kisan Sabha.

(iv) A pledge that the All Parties Government is purely war-time provisional government for national defence, and will not do anything which will prejudice the right of the minorities to self-determination after the war.

(v) A pledge that the All-Parties Government will put into execution practical plans to check hoarding and profiteering and facilitate an even distribution of foodstuffs and consumption articles : for building up a network of A.R.P. Shelters for the poorer peaple ; for development of co-operative industry and other people's co-operative soceieties : for stimulating production and facilitating transport.

(v) Abolition of racial discrimination in the Armed and Auxiliary forces.

5. The All-Parties Conference should then open negotiations with the British Government on the basis of this agreed plan and mobilise the whole people for the fulfilment of the plan.

6. A treaty of alliance be then concluded between the provisional National Government of India and the British Government on behalf of the United Nations, providing for supreme military control of the war by the High Command of the United Nations and India, with a supreme War Council in India, composed of representatives of Britain, the United States, Russia, China and India, and with the pledged obligation of the Indian National Government to assist in every way

to work in co-operation in all matters affecting the conduct of the war.

7. Provision be made for the formation of a People's army, not only for defence but also for aggressive operation against the Axis forces, particularly in Burma.

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